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Embassy of Qatar, Orange County Soccer Club Community Foundation Team Up to Support SoCal Military Families

IRVINE, Calif. — The Embassy of the State of Qatar to the United States and the [Orange County Soccer Club \(OCSC\) Community Foundation](#) kicked off a new partnership Saturday evening as the Club celebrated Military Appreciation Night at Championship Soccer Stadium. The initiative, part of the State of Qatar's ongoing commitment to the U.S. military and its families, begins a series of new programming led by the OCSC Foundation, with support from the Embassy, designed to celebrate and support military families and veterans in Southern California.

"The State of Qatar is the United States most reliable strategic and trusted partner, hosting the largest U.S. military base in the Middle East," **said H.E. Sheikh Meshal bin Hamad Al Thani, Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the United States.** "Our two countries share the same goal: to preserve the stability and security of the Middle East, and beyond. We are able to achieve this goal because of the service and dedication of the U.S. military and the support of their families. Through philanthropic partnerships such as these in California, we underscore our commitment to the U.S. and to this long-established friendship."

Qatar is host to over 10,000 American troops at the United States' largest overseas air base, Al Udeid, which serves as the forward headquarters for the fight against ISIS. These strong military ties have led to a series of Embassy-led partnerships to support servicemembers and their families on U.S. soil. Additional programming through the OCSC partnership will include a week-long soccer training camp for 100 children of veterans and active duty military personnel at the Irvine Great Park and a one-day Power UP event in partnership with [Working Wardrobes](#) to provide career counseling, communication workshops, and a professional support network to service members transitioning to civilian life.

As the host for the 2022 FIFA World Cup, which will take place in Doha next November and December, Qatar has a long and proud history of promoting sports as an avenue for diplomacy, including the Qatar National Team's participation in the CONCACAF Gold Cup in Houston this month. In 2020, the Qatar

Embassy partnered with OCSC and the Los Angeles Football Club to support their efforts to provide hunger relief to California residents during the coronavirus outbreak. As part of Qatar's National Sports Day celebration, the Embassy worked with these same partners to provide sports equipment to youth throughout southern California.

"The core mission of the OCSC Foundation is to use soccer as a vehicle for creating positive community impact, advancing social change and promoting health and wellness. We're grateful for the Embassy of Qatar's generous support on such a core piece of our programming for Southern California veterans and their families," said **Lisa Keston, Executive Director of the OCSC Community Foundation**. "With military personnel making up such a big part of our local communities across Southern California, these services are a crucial part of our efforts to convey our appreciation and gratitude for their service."

"We are thrilled to be working with The Embassy of the State of Qatar in the United States and the OCSC Community Foundation in their charitable efforts to support Veteran and Military families. Through their support of the Working Wardrobes VetNet program, we will serve even more military veterans and spouses with effective job training and supportive services that help them to reintegrate into civilian life, utilize skills gained through their military service, secure employment, and achieve economic self-sufficiency and success," said **Michael Barrett, VetNet Program Director for Working Wardrobes**.

ABOUT THE EMBASSY OF THE STATE OF QATAR TO THE UNITED STATES

The Embassy of the State of Qatar in Washington, D.C. houses Qatar's diplomatic mission to the United States. The primary purposes of the Embassy of Qatar are to highlight Qatar's policies on regional issues, strengthen Qatar-U.S. bilateral relations, and to assist Qatari citizens who travel or live in the U.S. The current Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the United States of America is His Excellency Sheikh Meshal Bin Hamad Al-Thani. For more information visit <https://qatar-usa.com>.

ABOUT THE OCSC COMMUNITY FOUNDATION:

The OCSC Community Foundation is the official charitable arm of the Orange County Soccer Club, a 501(c)(3) foundation founded in 2020 to serve the greater Orange County community. Its mission: To use soccer as a vehicle to promote health and wellness, support and empower our youth, foster an inclusive environment, and unify our local community.

ABOUT ORANGE COUNTY SOCCER CLUB:

Orange County Soccer Club (OCSC) is Orange County's only professional soccer team and is part of the United Soccer League (USL), the fastest growing Division II professional soccer league in the world. The USL is comprised of 35 teams across the United States. The team plays its home games at the 5,500-seat Orange County Great Park Championship Soccer Stadium, located in Irvine, CA. OCSC's strategic partner is historic the European power Rangers Football Club of Glasgow in the Scottish Premier League. OCSC signed the youngest male in United States soccer history to a professional contract, Francis Jacobs, in 2019 at the age of 14. The team also executed the first ever player move from the USL to Wolfsburg of the German Bundesliga with Bryang Kayo in early 2020, followed by the transfer of OC native Aaron Cervantes to Rangers FC in late 2020. OCSC's preceding club, Orange County Blues, was one of 12 founding members of the USL during its inaugural 2011 season. Team owner and Chief Investment Officer of LARO Properties, James Keston, purchased and re-branded the team in 2017. Keston, who actively oversees all operations of the team, is dedicated to providing a pathway to

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professional soccer and a world-class soccer organization that focuses on the fans, players and youth clubs of Orange County.

For more information about Orange County Soccer Club, and to experience professional soccer in the OC, visit: <http://www.orangecountysoccer.com>. For more information about the United Soccer League, visit: <http://www.uslsoccer.com>.

ABOUT WORKING WARDROBES:

Working Wardrobes is Orange County's foremost career development nonprofit, championing on behalf of at-risk men, women, young adults, and veterans to help them achieve the dignity of work. Founded in 1990 by CEO/Founder Jerri Rosen, Working Wardrobes has been serving the Southern California region for over 30 years, providing job training, career placement, and wardrobe services to more than 105,000 clients to overcome barriers to employment and achieve the Power of a Paycheck®. For more information, please visit www.workingwardrobes.org.

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